

a step of creating a usage log including information of ~~of~~on a content usage fee up to an allowable amount of money set in an issue log;

a step of creating a receive log including the information of ~~of~~on the content usage fee based on said usage log; and

a step of performing settlement processing for electronic money spent for the use of the content based on said receive log,

wherein,

said computer program executes said steps in cooperation with said program providing medium.

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are pending in the application.

In the Office Action of October 6, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15, 16, 20-24, 26, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 102(b) as anticipated by USP 5,629,980 (Stefik et al.). Claims 3-5, 14, 17-19 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103 as unpatentable over Stefik et al.

In response, independent claims 1, 15, 26 and 27 have been amended to clarify same.

Each of the independent claims requires the creation of a "usage log" by a user device which is configured to use the content. The "usage log" is then used in the fee collection transactions. With such a log, it is possible to assess and collect fees based on usage on an on-going basis.

In the present invention, a "clearing center" manages the usable amount of electronic money by creating the issue log that is sent to the user device. The user device spends the electronic money up to the maximum amount allowed by the issue log. The user device logs depletion of the electronic money in a "usage log."


Moreover, the user device does not send the "usage log" directly to the clearing center as their interactions need only relate to the issuance of the issue log and the electronic money prior to the content obtaining transaction performed by the user device. The distribution and use of content are thus restricted by the allowed maximum amount of electronic money as determined by the "usage control policy of the content."

Stefik et al discloses a system for controlling the distribution of content. However, in Stefik et al, the digital rights are permanently "attached" to the content to define the manner and amount of usage of the content (See Stefik, Col. 6, Lines 51-56). Stefik et al. nowhere fairly discloses or suggests a way to control the amount of money spent by a user, or the maximum amount of money spent by the user.

At Col. 7, lines 33-37, cited by the examiner, Stefik et al. describes how in step 108 (See Figure 1) both the user device (Repository 2) and the content provider (Repository 1) interact with the credit server at the same time to confirm billing parameters. This is nothing like the usage/money control recited in the claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1-27 are not anticipated by or obvious in view of Stefik et al and are patentable. It is therefore submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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